

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VIENTI 01622 061450Z

63

ACTION DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 DODE-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02

SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 SR-02 ORM-01

AID-05 L-02 H-01 /062 W

----- 048913

R 061046Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2794

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CANBERRA 1891

USMISSION GENEVA

CINCPAC

CDR JCRC CP SAMAE SAN THAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1622

D/PW FOR HENDERSON

GENEVA FOR SEIVERTS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CASC, LA

SUBJECT: AMCIT CHARLES M. DEAN

1. AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR BORTHWICK MET WITH PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG MARCH 5 TO DISCUSS DEAN/SHARMAN CASE AND I MET WITH HIM MARCH 6. BORTHWICK REPORTS HIS CONVERSATION WAS MOST UNSATISFACTORY AS THE PRINCE TOOK THE POSITION HE HAD TOO MANY IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO TO BE BOTHERED WITH DEAN/SHARMAN. HE DID SAY HE WOULD LOOK INTO IT WHEN HE WENT TO SAM NEUA AND HE SUBSCRIBED TO THE IDEA THAT A VISIT THERE BY BORTHWICK COULD BE ARRANGED. BORTHWICK CAME AWAY HOTTER UNDER THE COLLAR THAN HE HAS BEEN TO DATE.

2. SOUPHANOUVONG WAS POLITE AND LESS BLAND WITH ME. I OPENED BY MENTIONING THE SANAN LETTER (VIENTIANE 1467) WHICH I FOUND VERY UNPERSUASIVE. I SAID THE IMPLIED ACCUSATION AGAINST THE THAIS WAS ABSURD. I HAD MYSELF SEEN A PERSON WHO HAD BEEN ON
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 VIENTI 01622 061450Z

THE BOAT WHEN THE BOYS WERE TAKEN OFF BY PATHET LAO SOLDIERS.

SOUPHANOUVONG REPLIED THAT NEVERTHELESS HE WAS SKEPTICAL OF THE INFO WE HAD PROVIDED. IT ALL CAME FROM ONE SIDE. THE SITUATION IN THE AREA IN WHICH THE BOYS WERE SUPPOSEDLY HELD HAD BEEN CONFUSED FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND IT WAS DIFFICULT TO DISCERN THE MOTIVATIONS OF VARIOUS GROUPS. I REPLIED THAT IT WAS INDEED MOST UNFORTUNATE THAT THE INFORMATION ALL CAME FROM ONE SIDE. WE HAD BEEN HOPING FOR SOMETHING FROM THE PL BUT ALL WE HAD RECEIVED WERE DENIALS WHICH WERE NOT VERY CONVINCING.

3. SOUPHANOUVONG THEN MADE A LONG STATEMENT COVERING THE FOLLOWING POINTS.

A) HE WAS DOING HIS UTMOST TO LET BYGONES BE BYGONES AND TO WORK FOR PEACE AND NATIONAL CONCORD. THERE WERE LAO AND FOREIGN GROUPS, INCLUDING AMERICANS, WHO WISHED TO SEE THE PGNU FAIL. HE KNEW I WAS SINCERELY DOING MY BEST AND WHILE HE DIDN'T WANT TO IMPLY THAT I WAS NOT IN CHARGE OF MY EMBASSY SOME BRANCHES OF THE USG IN LAOS AND THAILAND WERE HOSTILE TO THE REGIME. IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO MAKE A FRESH START IN U.S./ LAO RELATIONS. MANY QUESTIONS NEEDED TO BE RESOLVED. EVEN THE KISSINGER LETTER HAD GIVEN HIM SECOND THOUGHTS AND THE AIR BASE AT NAKHON PHANOM WAS TAKEN BY HIS PARTY AS AN INDICATION OF AMERICAN ILL WILL TOWARD LAOS. WE SHOULD ALL WORK TOGETHER FOR PEACE AND PROGRESS.

B) ON THE SUBJECT OF THE BOYS, HE WOULD DO HIS BEST TO GET THE CASE RESOLVED. COMMUNICATIONS WERE BAD IN THEIR ZONE AND ALL THEIR GOOD CADRES WERE IN THE PGNU WORKING FOR RECONCILIATION. HE WAS DOING HIS UTMOST TO GET INFORMATION AND WOULD BE GOING TO SAM NEUA SOON. WE WOULD SEE EACH OTHER WHEN HE GOT BACK AND HE WOULD GIVE ME HIS CONSIDERED VIEW OF THIS AFFAIR. HE HOPED THAT MEANWHILE I WOULD EXPLAIN HIS VIEWS TO WASHINGTON.

4. WHEN I COULD GET IN A WORD EDGEWISE, I COMMENTED THAT OUR ACTIONS SINCE THE FORMATION OF THE PGNU DEMONSTRATED OUR DESIRE TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH IT AND THAT WE SINCERELY DESIRED TO PLAY A HELPFUL ROLE. IT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS THAT WE WERE NOT CONSPIRING AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. THE FACT NKP WAS NEAR LAOS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS A THREAT TO THE KINGDOM. I THOUGHT SUSPICION AND MISTRUST WERE DIMINISHING BUT THE DEAN/

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 VIENTI 01622 061450Z

SHARMAN CASE WAS CASTING AN UNNECESSARY SHADOW. ANY SKEPTICISM ABOUT OUR INFORMATION COULD BE RESOLVED BY THE JOINT COMMISSION WHICH SHOULD BE ABLE TO VERIFY IT. I BELIEVED IT WOULD BE HARD TO REFUTE. I APPRECIATED THE PRINCE'S WILLINGNESS TO PURSUE THE CASE WHEN HE WENT TO SAM NEUA.

5. COMMENT: I GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT SOUPHANOUVONG UNDERSTANDS THAT THE SANAN LETTER IS NOT A SATISFACTORY RESPONSE BUT THAT

THERE IS NOT MUCH HE CAN DO WITHOUT IT HENCE HIS LONG DIGRESSION
ABOUT LAO/U.S. RELATIONS. HIS COMMENTS REVEAL ONCE AGAIN HOW
PARANOID HE AND HIS ASSOCIATES CONTINUE TO BE ABOUT U.S.
INTENTIONS IN THIS COUNTRY. HE SSEMS CONVINCED THAT WHILE I AM
FRIENDLY BUT NAIVE WHITE HAT, THERE ARE A LOT OF BLACK HATS
OUT IN THE MESQUITE.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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